

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 EUR-12 PRS-01 DODE-00 DLOS-03

AF-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 IO-10 PA-01 USIA-06 L-02 ACDA-05 /082 W

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P R 121355Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5209

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 15276

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XO, MPOL, US, IN

SUBJ: DEPLOYMENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

REF: STATE 242794

1. THE INDIAN PRESS REPORTED NOVEMBER 9 THAT A US TASK FORCE WAS ON ITS WAY TO THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE ITEM WAS PAGE ONE NEWS ON ALMOST ALL OF THE INDIAN PRESS WE NORMALLY SEE. TREATMENT VARIED FROM BRIEF AND FACTUAL TO MORE INTERPRETIVE SUCH AS G.K. REDDY'S HINDU ARTICLE (PARA 2) OR OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL AS IN THE PATRIOT. MANY OF THE PAPERS ON NOV. 9 ACCOUNTS REPORTED "DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE DESPATCHED WARSHIPS TO THE INDIAN OCEAN JUST A WEEK AFTER THE VISIT OF DR. KISSINGER WHO HAD VOICED AMERICAN DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH INDIA." THE PATRIOT SAID THAT "OFFICIAL CIRCLES IN NEW DELHI EXPRESSED DISMAY AT THE REPORTED MOVEMENT OF THE TASK FORCE." PATRIOT AND THE HINDI LANGUAGE JANAYUG HAVE RUN EDITORIALS AND FEATURES ON THE 10TH, 11TH AND 12TH CONTINUING TO CRITICIZE THE MOVEMENT.

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2. G.K.REDDY'S STORY BEGINS BY SAYING THAT A WEEK AFTER THE

KISSINGER VISIT, INDIA AND US ARE HEADING FOR ANOTHER FUTILE CONTROVERSY OVER DIEGO GARCIA. THERE COULD HAVE BEEN NO WORSE TIMING FOR DESPATCH OF SUCH A FORCE.

REDDY NOTES UPCOMING NON-OFFICIAL CONFERENCE IN DELHI BEING ORGANIZED BY PRO-SOVIET FRONT ORGANIZATIONS AND SAYS SENDING US TASK FORCE AT THIS TIME "WOULD NATURALLY PROVIDE THE NECESSARY BACKDROP FOR CONDEMNING THE AMERICAN BID TO EXTEND THE DIEGO GARCIA BASE AS A TANGIBLE SYMBOL OF ITS DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN A MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA FOR LENDING WEIGHT TO ITS POLITICAL INTERESTS." REDDY ALSO REVIEWS SOVIET FACILITIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN NOTING THAT THEY HAVE NO BASES BUT HAVE ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS BUNKERING AND OTHER FACILITIES AND THAT OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL WILL LEAD TO GREATER SOVIET DEPLOYMENTS.

3. CPI LEADER BHUPESH GUPTA IN THE OPENING SESSION OF THE RAJYA SUBHA ON NOVEMBER 11 DEMANDED A STATEMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ON THIS "LATEST MENACING MOVE" BY THE UNITED STATES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. FOLLOWING A HIGHLY FAVORABLE REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT ("CREATED A SATISFACTORY BASIS FOR A MATURE RELATIONSHIP"), JOINT SECRETARY FOR THE AMERICAS TEJA TOLD THE DCM NOVEMBER 12 THAT THERE WOULD OF COURSE CONTINUE TO BE ISSUES ON WHICH WE WOULD DISAGREE. TEJA NOTED THAT US DEPLOYMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WAS SUCH AN ISSUE AND THAT IT WOULD COME UP BOTH IN PARLIAMENT (WHICH CONVENED THE TWELFTH) AND IN THE NEW DELHI CONFERENCE. TEJA ASSURED THE DCM THAT WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER OPENED THAT CONFERENCE HE WOULD NOT GO BEYOND STATING EXISTING INDIAN POLICY REGARDING THE INDIAN OCEAN.
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